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BRIEFER ARTICLES.

NOTES ON NORTH AMERICAN GRASSES. IV.

POA FLAVA L. and P. SEROTINA EHRH.

IN the first edition of his *Species Plantarum* (1:68. 1753), LINNAEUS describes this species as follows:

7. *Poa panicula diffusa*, spiculis ovato oblongis nitidis. Gron. virg. 13.
Gramen pratense majus virginianum. Pet. mus. 239.
Habitat in Virginia.

This has been considered by many authors as identical with *Poa serotina* Ehrh. which occurs in Europe and also in the northern part of North America. The identity of the two was probably assumed from MUNRO's statement: "7. *P. flava*, marked Gron. virg. 13, is *Poa crocata* Michx.; but that name should be altered to *P. flava*." (Identification of the grasses in Linnaeus' herbarium, Proc. Linn. Soc. Bot. 6:43.)

Referring to GRONOVIVS' *Flora Virginica* we find that he cites Clayton 273. Clayton's no. 273, then, becomes the type of *Poa flava* L. Clayton's plants are in the herbarium of the British Museum. Mr. A. B. RENDLE has kindly examined this plant and informs me that it is *Triodia cuprea* Jacq. KUNTZE states that *Poa flava* L., *P. seslerioides* Michx., and *Triodia cuprea* Jacq. are identical, and hence proposes the name *Sieglingia flava* O. K. (Rev. Gen. 2:789). He does not state, however, upon what he bases his statement. The fact that Linnaeus based the name upon a plant collected by Clayton and gave the locality as Virginia should have led American botanists to doubt the reference of *Poa flava* to *Poa serotina*, as the latter plant does not occur in Virginia.

Poa flava was taken up by several authors after LINNAEUS, as PERSOON, WILDENOW, and PURSH, but apparently without knowing the grass, since *Poa seslerioides* Michx. was also retained.

There is still a point upon which more light is needed, that is, the identity of *Poa crocata* Michx. Although MUNRO states that *Poa flava* L. is the same as *Poa crocata* Michx., I cannot confirm this. I did not observe *Poa flava* in Linnaeus' herbarium nor *Poa crocata* in Michaux's herbarium at Paris. From the description and the type locality, near Hudson's Bay, it may well be one of the northern Poas allied to *P. serotina*, such as *P.*

glauca Vahl., but can scarcely be *Triodia cuprea* Jacq., which does not occur north of New York. PERSOON (*Syn. Pl.*) refers *P. crocea* [*crocata*] to his *P. hydrophila*, which is given in *Kew Index* as a synonym of *Leersia oryzoides*. Nuttall (*Gen. Pl.*) retains *P. crocata*, and refers to this *P. hydrophila* Pers. as a doubtful synonym.

Furthermore as to the validity of *P. serotina* Ehr. (Beiträge 6:83. 1791). This rests upon the mention of the name in EHRHART's list of plants entitled "Index Calamarium, Graminum et Tripetaloidearum Linn., quas in usum Botanophilorum collegit et exsiccavit." Miss MARY A. DAY, who has kindly verified the reference for me at the Gray Herbarium, states that the name is mentioned without description, "*Poa serotina*, Ehrh. Upsaliae." As this is a *nomen nudum*, the name was not technically published, and the next name in chronological order should be taken up. This appears to be *Poa triflora* Gilib. Exerc. Phyt. 2:531. 1792.

Poa triflora Gilib. has been confused in America with *P. nemoralis* L., but both species occur in the northern portions and extend southward in the western mountains. In the northeastern states *Poa triflora* extends southward to Pennsylvania and is quite common northward, while *P. nemoralis* is rare and seems to be introduced.

P. palustris L. (*Syst. ed. 10.* 874. 1759) is used by ASCHERSON and GRAEBNER (*Synops. Mitteleur. Flora* 2:416) for *P. serotina* Ehrh., but this name is founded on a plate in MORRISON's *History* (p. 201, *pl. 6, fig. 27*), which is *Phalaris arundinacea*, and consequently cannot be used for our plant, *P. triflora* Gilib.

DIGITARIA Heist.

This is generally cited as "Heist. ex Adans. *Pl. Fam.* 2:38. 1763." This is based upon Plukenet, *pl. 190, fig. 2*, which is *Tripsacum dactyloides* L. (*Index* 550). Consequently, according to the recent "Code of Botanical Nomenclature," *Digitaria* Heist. ex Adans. is published (*Canon* 10, 3), and its type is *Coixdactyloides* L. Sp. 972. 1753, inasmuch as LINNAEUS (*l. c.*) cites Plukenet, *pl. 190, fig. 2*. *Tripsacum*, based upon *Coix dactyloides*, was established in 1759 (*Syst. ed. 10*).

Digitaria as commonly understood was published by SCOPOLI (*Fl. Carn.* 1772). The type of *Digitaria* Scop. is *D. sanguinale*, as this was the first species described. Since the name *Digitaria* had been used earlier for a different group, certain botanists thought it advisable to reject this name for the group typified by *Panicum sanguinale*, and take up the next name in chronological order, *Syntherisma* Walt.

The fact seems to have been overlooked that the name *Digitaria* was used at an earlier date than that of ADANSON'S *Familles des Plantes*. I

noticed the name in the second edition of FABRICIUS *Enum. Pl. Hort. Helm.* (1763), where it is based upon "Gramen ischaemon Plinii, Clus. H. CCXVII," and "Panicum spicis aggregatis, basi interiore nodosi, flosculis, geminis muticis vaginis foliorum punctatis, L. Sp. 8?" Both these citations refer to *Panicum sanguinale* L. This work is at the Missouri Botanical Garden. KUNTZE states that although dated 1763 this work appeared after that of ADANSON. It would appear that the latter author may have adopted the word from FABRICIUS nevertheless. If the name appeared in the first edition of FABRICIUS and with the same type, then there would be no doubt about its antedating ADANSON. I have not been able to find this work in America, but it is in London, and MR. EDMUND BAKER has kindly sent me a transcript of what appears concerning Digitaria. It says "Digitaria Heist. Dactylis Raj. Gramen dactylon majus panicula longa, spicis pluribus nudis crassis. Sloane." (FABRICIUS *Enum. Pl. Hort. Helm.* 207. 1759). The same citation from SLOANE appears under *Panicum dissectum* L. Sp. 57. 1753. Consequently Digitaria is published according to the canon of the code above mentioned.

But *Paspalum* L. was established in the same year (*Syst. ed.* 10. 855, 1759) and is typified by *Panicum dissectum* L., as this is the first species mentioned, although LINNAEUS changes the name to *Paspalum dimidiatum*. There is a curious mix-up here. In the first edition of the *Species Plantarum* LINNAEUS describes as no. 6 *Panicum dissectum*, which is *Paspalum dissectum* L. Sp. ed. 2, to which he erroneously refers Sloane's pl. 69, fig. 2, and no. 7, *Panicum dimidiatum*, which is *Stenotaphrum dimidiatum*. In the tenth edition of the *Systema* he publishes *Paspalum*, but names the first species *P. dimidiatum*, although he bases it upon his *Panicum dissectum* no. 6. SLOANE'S plant above mentioned he names *P. virgatum*. In the second edition of the *Species Plantarum* he corrects the difficulty and publishes *Paspalum dissectum* based upon *Panicum dissectum* of the first edition.

There are still two questions to be answered. Which was published first, FABRICIUS or LINNAEUS' *Systema*? Was Digitaria published in some earlier work of HEISTER'S?

It may be remarked that HALLER uses Digitaria in the same sense as SCOPOLI and a few years earlier, basing it upon *Panicum sanguinale* and *Cynodon dactylon* (Hall. Stirp. Helv. 2:244. 1768).

The difficulties mentioned emphasize the evil consequences which may arise from changing well known names without sufficient investigation.—A. S. HITCHCOCK, *U. S. Dept. Agriculture, Washington, D. C.*